

Assessment of Bulgarian nature conservation policy

1993 - 2005

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The article is a summary of a report presenting the results of Green Balkan's 10-year program "Public support to the reform in nature conservation legislation" as well as the results achieved during an international project of CEEWEB, Green Balkans and other 10 East European countries, focusing on analyses of governmental conservation policies in Eastern Europe. The report was presented in parallel events of the Fifth European conference of environmental ministers "Environment for Europe". Based on the original methodology, developed by CEEWEB Bulgarian normative and management acts have been assessed, as well as the state of the institutional reform, inter-sector integration and capacities in the field of biological diversity. The recommendations presented are part of the joint NGO statement of the 10 East European countries, which was reported on the forum "The state of Pan-European Biodiversity Policy from NGO Point of View" within the Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", Kyiv, 21-23 May, 2003.

The second part of the article summarizes the results of two working meetings with experts on the subject "Preparedness of the Bulgarian government to fulfill commitments undertaken by the **Kiev Resolution on Biodiversity**, and to achieve the declared goal –**halting the loss of biodiversity on all levels by 2010**.

PART ?

ASSESSMENT OF THE CONSERVATION POLICY IN THE PERIOD 1993-2003

I. INTRODUCTION

Although the line between environmental policy and nature conservation policy is indistinct, both directions maintain their own instruments, which, sometimes, are clearly distinguished.

Main argument of the Bulgarian Green Balkans nature conservation organization and the author of the present report for choosing nature conservation as their mission is the fact that traditionally this subject is underrated and disregarded in countries of newly established democracy. The society in these countries exercises more successful influence on that part of the environmental policy, which directly affects people's health (urban environment, water pollution, air, waste, etc.).

The most important document in the field of nature-conservation - the National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy, was elaborated in pursuance of Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, by an extremely authoritative forum, involving 75 Bulgarian scientists, as well as Bulgarian and foreign experts, with the financial support of USAID. The analyses and assessments of the Bulgarian biological diversity provided in the

Strategy, regarding issues as endemism, relict characteristic, habitat structure, place small Bulgaria in the third place in Europe, after Spain and France.

Since 1989, the new way of Bulgaria towards Europe has already been drawn. The question that the nature conservation society asked themselves was how long this way would be – 10 or 20 years, and what “losses” would be suffered; how many species and habitats of European importance will become extinct until Pan-European protection is obtained – contemporary nature-conservation legislation and adequate institutions for its enforcement. Unfortunately, at present, 15 years later, the list of these losses is long and sad. Approximately 15% of the Bulgarian forests have been either completely destroyed or their conservation value has been sharply decreased. The areas of species and habitats of European conservation importance have been considerably reduced, and some of them have been almost entirely destroyed. We will cite one example only: in the Maritsa River basin (the biggest river in Southern Bulgaria), in the period 1992-2000, on an area of 10 000 sq km., 70% of the plain and riverside forests, compared to their area in 1986, were destroyed. In 1986, these communities were inhabited by 1100 colonially nesting pairs of bird species that are rare in Europe – Little egret, Night heron, Squacco heron and Pygmy cormorant. In 2001, the number of these birds was decreased to 300 nesting pairs.

The reasons for the mass deterioration and destruction of habitats and species are numerous and interrelated. The extreme poverty forced unemployed people turn to natural resources to ensure essential needs such as heating and food provision. The lack of an adequate nature-conservation legislation and structures was not the most serious problem to be solved, but mainly the low culture and accomplishments of national and local authorities that “turned a blind eye” to the mass forest felling, considering that this was the way to soften social pressure.

The land and forest restitution was another actual and serious threat to the biological diversity in the recent years. (Restoration of the ownership of forests, taken away by the totalitarian regime in 1950, was initiated in 1996. Unfortunately, the new forest owners, most of which are poorly circumstanced, do not have the knowledge needed for their management, and rely on the restored forests as a way to achieve wealth quickly.). According to some experts (9) in the period 1990-2002, losses of natural resources and biological diversity, comparable to the latest 50 years of the 20C, have been caused. The main reason for the high level of threats is the lack of a nature-conservation policy adequate to the European standards.

The article presents popular description of summarized assessments of the problems, deriving from the shortcomings of the normative base and the insufficient development of the institutions in the field of biological and landscape diversity. A brief assessment has been also made of the capacity state in this field, as well as of the extent, to which they could implement the reform in the nature-conservation policy.

?? SELECTED APPROACHES. METHODOLOGY

Analyses, assessments and recommendations are elaborated on the basis of **three leading directions**:

1. Assessment of the state of conservation instruments.

1.1. State of the process of harmonization of internal conservation legislation and implementation of international commitments (ratification and implementation of the set of international conventions in the field of biological and landscape diversity).

1.2. Assessment of availability and quality of political documents in the field of biological and landscape diversity. The emphasis is put on the implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy and the National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy.



Analyses and recommendations are prepared according to the complete set of conservation instruments, separated in three groups: 19 Bulgarian normative acts (Table 1); 8 international conventions (Table 2); 8 political documents (strategies and declarations) (Table 3).

2. Assessment on the process of inter-sector integration.

Assessment on the process of integrating the normative base in the field of biological diversity in resource and inter-departmental plans and policy, with particular emphasis on:

- ? Review of the National Development Plan as a model of inter-sector integration.
- ? Review of four district and 10 municipal development plans in the region of South Bulgaria.

3. Assessment of the state of capacities, structures and systems for decision making in the field of biological and landscape diversity.

Analyses have been made on the state of national and regional capacities, as well as on decision-making system (institutions, subordination and responsibilities).

Methodologies. The assessments, analyses and interviews were made by Green Balkans experts. Surveys are based on the original methodology for strategic environmental assessment, developed by the Ecological Institute for Sustainable Development, provided by CEEWEB.

The assessment of capacity state and decision-making system is implemented on the basis of a survey, elaborated by Green Balkans.

III. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Assessment in the reform in nature conservation legislation.

The process of approximation of Bulgarian nature-conservation legislation starts with the ratification of international conventions in the field of biological diversity. In the period 1990-1997, the whole package of conventions has been ratified. (see Table 2). Article 5, paragraph 4 of the new Constitution of Bulgaria (1990) has got a key significance, according to which "International agreements, ratified in accordance with the constitution, promulgated and effective for the Republic of Bulgaria, are part of the internal law of the country. They have the advantage over those norms of the internal legislation that contradict them."

The incentive that was expected in the reform in nature conservation legislation by the **National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy** (1993-1994) was not justified. The document stayed on paper and even five years later, the Ministerial Council did not find time to ratify it. Hopes were set on the Ministerial conference "Environment for Europe", held in Sofia, October 1995, when the **Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy** was adopted. Unfortunately, PEBLDS did not manage to catalyze the harmonization process and reform in nature conservation legislation.

Despite the good juridical basis, which Art. 5 of the Constitution provides, the existence of framework political documents (strategies) until 1997,

The real urge towards approximation of legislation appeared much later (1997-99), when concrete programs in terms, required by the European Commission needed to be accepted. Very shortly nine acts were adopted in the field of environment, among which the Protected Areas Act and the Forest Act.

This is an indisputable quantitative success of the Government and Parliament program. Unfortunately, these quantitative accumulations did not lead to considerable qualitative changes.



The gap between high speed of law creation and introduction of normatives into practice, as well as their institutional coverage is still big.

The greatest achievement in the field of nature conservation policy and law creation is the recently adopted Biological Diversity Act (August 9th, 2002). It integrates the commitments resulting from several international conventions (CITES, CBD, Bonn, etc.), and, most of all, EU Directive on Habitats (92/43). It could be considered that adopting this Act the main part of approximation in the field of nature conservation policy has been completed. The process of elaboration of statutory documents for enforcement of the Biological Diversity Act, and, most of all, for the implementation of the European program "Natura 2000" in Bulgaria, started in September. The Act postulates the protection of all territories of high conservation value, as selection criteria have been conformed to the lists and Annexes of the EU Directive on Habitats 92/43 and the Directive on Birds 79/409/EEC.

The quality of approximation in resource legislation is lower (Forests Act, Hunting Act, and Medicinal Plants Act). Negotiations in this sector are considerably impeded, since there is an infringement on the interests of serious resource agencies. Although above-mentioned resource acts are new (adopted in the period 1996-2002), they comprise shortcomings. These shortcomings resulted from infringement on economic interests. For example, in the Forests Act, these are the texts referring to the protection of alluvial, riverside and plain forest communities. A requirement, introduced by Directive 92/43, as well as by the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy. A whole sector related to the forest control and sustainable management has not been developed enough, stimulating corruption and poor forest management.

2. Assessment of the inter-sector integration process.

Inter-sector integration is compulsory. The relevant legal and political grounds are:

- ? Art. 5 of the Bulgarian Constitution
- ? Art. 6, paragraph "b" of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Requirement for inter-sector integration is also included in the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (Action theme 2) and the National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy (NBDCS).

The overall process was a subject of an assessment, based on implemented interviews and surveys. Sector plans of different hierarchy in the field of agriculture, construction and regional development were also considered. With only a few exceptions, we might say that elements of inter-sector integration were not found. The surveyed documents not only lack integrating texts but also do not mention the titles of the ratified in Bulgaria conventions on biological diversity, PEBLDS and even the Bulgarian National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy.

Special attention was paid to the national document called "National Economic Development Plan".

The document was subjected to an assessment in conformity with the test for strategic environmental assessment methodology, prepared by the Hungarian Ecological Institute for Sustainable Development (6). Unfortunately, the report volume does not allow well-grounded presentation of the results. The assessment is implemented in three categories: situation analysis, environmental awareness and assessment of the plan with special regard to biodiversity. In all the three sectors the Bulgarian plan gets extremely low score. According to this score, the methodology recommends re-planning.

The situation is even more serious regarding the inter-sector integration in the surveyed 4 district and 10 municipal plans. In many of these plans, the key conservation documents are not even mentioned, and there is no trace of inter-sector integration.



Small exception from this rule is the regional document called “Strategy for the Protection and Restoration of Floodplain Forests on the Bulgarian Danube Islands”. Unfortunately, this document is advisable for the forest resource managers, and actually it is not of great national significance.

3. Assessment of the state of capacities, structures and decision-making system in the field of biological and landscape diversity.

Capacity development should be an integral part of the reform in nature conservation policy. Unfortunately, this sector is significantly falling behind due to the inadequate political assessment of the importance of the *biodiversity conservation* sector.

There are two sides to the problem – quantitative and qualitative. In terms of the **qualitative side** referred, the structures that are responsible for the state policy in the field of biological diversity conservation, are extremely insufficient. The numeric strength of these state officials is only 5 % of the staff of the Ministry of Environment and Waters and its regional structures. The regional departments of the Ministry, the so called Regional Inspectorates of Environment and Waters amount to a maximum of 50 officials. Each of these 15 regional territorial units have 1-2 experts in the field of biological diversity, i.e. the average for the country is one person responsible for an area of 5300 km² (without counting the personnel of the protected areas, which take up to 4,9 % of the country territory). Is it possible for a single person to control the level of the threats to such an area, to conduct state policy for seven international conventions and 19 internal normative acts, to monitor the state of the protected areas, to be in charge of issuing permissions for the use of identified nature resources and nine other tasks, which are not listed here, but proceed from the legal provisions and structural regulations?

Appointment of the so-called municipal ecologists started in the past five years in many of the Bulgarian municipalities (262).

Green Balkans conducted a survey in 32 municipalities for assessment of the capacity of these specialists regarding biological and landscape diversity. Part of the survey was financially supported by UNDP-Bulgaria and PHARE ACCESS EU program. 45 questions in 4 major trends were asked: adequate education, specialized knowledge (conservation and resource management), experience in the subject and skills for partners work. Further details may be received from a report owned by UNDP and Green Balkans.

The survey results revealed an extremely unsatisfactory level of qualification of the municipal decision-makers. Only 10 % of them demonstrated appropriate knowledge, on a low level at that, regarding biological and landscape diversity.

Unfortunately, the survey found out that municipal ecologists deal mainly with the problems of urban environment (water and air pollution, solid domestic waste, illegal construction works). Their commitment to problems of biodiversity is an important **future reserve** for the success of the nature-conservation reform.

PART ??

CONSERVATION POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE KIEV RESOLUTION ON BIODIVERSITY ADOPTED AT THE FIFTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE “ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE”

? CONTRIBUTION OF THE KIEV RESOLUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL CONSERVATION POLICIES

Although brief, the Kiev Resolution is a key political conservation document. This article is not an analysis of the Resolution; however, some of its contributions are listed below.



? The Kiev Resolution confirmed (reanimated) the role of the Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy as an important instrument for regional implementation of the CBD (*the Strategy was adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" that was held in October 1995 in Sofia*).

? In several of its sectors, Kiev Resolution paid attention to and recommended activating the slow process of inter-sector integration.

? The main contribution of the Resolution is the determined commitment of the states of the Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy to **halt the loss of biodiversity on all levels** by 2010. The Ministers undertook also the commitment to work for the achieving of this ambitious goal through common engagements in several key sectors: **forests, agriculture, Pan European Ecological Network, invasive species**, etc.

? The Ministers agreed to increase significantly the funding for the public and private sectors and their involvement in integrated activities for biodiversity conservation.

?? IS THE 2010 TARGET ACHIEVABLE FOR THE BULGARIAN CONSERVATION POLICY?

The shortest answer is: NOT in the current situation of the inter-sector integration and inadequate provisions of the state budget to the sector of biological and landscape diversity conservation.

This article does not pretend to make a complete analysis and give an answer to this question. It is intended only to initiate a future public and expert discussion. The theses presented below do not comprise all aspects of the conservation policy, and only those that are of key importance for the EU accession.

1. Assessment of the preparedness for achieving the 2010 target in the sector of conservation legislation and direct conservation policy.

Conservation legislation. Although approximation in the conservation sector of the legislation is almost completed (this does not relate to the resource legislation), there is not much effect, as actually, the new nature-conservation legislation is not applied due to the reasons listed in the first part of the article. However, some of the laws have a lot of shortcomings that indisputably need to be amended. Unfortunately, for the past months the Government has made an attempt with good intentions, but rather unsuccessfully, for such amendment, which normally provokes negative reactions in the public. There are more serious gaps in the legislative provision for Natura 2000, and especially in the financial and inter-sector part. Some experts believe that such legislative provisions are mandatory. Others believe the Biodiversity Act should cover these problems. However, we believe that there should be insurance. An example of such insurance is the inclusion of texts about inter-sector integration in the GMO Act (*cultivation of GMO within 30 km from the Natura 2000 sites is not allowed*).

Direct Conservation Policy. A key element of this sector is the establishment of the **National Ecological Network**. For this, the Bulgarian Government has signed the Kiev Resolution and the special Statement for the establishment of the network, which is an integral part of the undertaken commitments. A careful review of these documents shows that their implementation is hardly probable. For example: according to the Kiev Resolution, the Network has to be entirely established by 2006, as this involves not only the main areas, but also the other three territory types (*restoration territories, corridors, and buffer zones*). So far, only one third of the potential areas have been identified. There is almost no success in terms of identification of restoration areas. However, the most serious problem is that the areas have to be not only identified, but also secured with funds for their management at least. Yet, a shocking indicator has to be mentioned concerning the lack of preparedness on the side of the Government in terms of this Network: **the absolutely inadequate provisions of the state budget, demonstrated by the appointment of a**



single specialist to be responsible for the establishment of the whole network throughout the country. Another important problem, related to Natura 2000 is the considerable falling behind with the development of the compensatory schemes.

It is clear now that in order to keep the promises made in Kiev revolutionary changes are needed in funding and in the structures responsible for the establishment of the National Environmental Network. Unfortunately, there are no indicators and willingness for such changes.

The National Action Plan for Biological Diversity Conservation should be the main document guiding all processes and activities related to the conservation of biodiversity. In numerous forums, many experts have ascertained that the first Plan cannot fulfill this function. If the Plan being developed now follows the same logical scheme and is as superficial as the first one, this will be a serious obstacle to the achieving of the 2010 target. Hopefully, the new Plan (unlike the previous one) will provide clear planning of the commitments of the national budget to the biological diversity. A good Action Plan should be the strongest instrument for the achieving of the 2010 target. There is not much chance for the new Bulgarian Plan to be qualitative and detailed enough, due to the insufficient capacity and financial security for its elaboration.

2. Assessment of the preparedness related to the quality of the resource legislation and normative base.

Forest legislation and policy. As it was mentioned in the first part of the article, the problems here are bigger and the preparedness is quite low.

Relatively good activeness and willingness for changes were demonstrated by the last government, which, supported by GEF/World Bank, developed a series of documents and models for restructuring of the forest sector. The proposed models contained quite good and brave policies, especially in terms of measures to control and combat corruption. Unfortunately, small parts of this concept, related to the management of the National Forest Company, activated the timber-producing lobby, which managed to stop in a backstage and silent manner the initiated reform. All these factors are extremely alarming, and if not overcome in the nearest future, they will endanger the achieving of the 2010 target and the fulfillment of the commitments undertaken with the Kiev Resolution.

The scandalous low level of inter-sector integration is particularly obvious in the policy of **water, land, and landscape resource management**. The most drastic threats relate to this sector. The threats do not decrease. Moreover, they increase considerably the losses of biodiversity in the past years, which is a natural consequence of the obvious stir in the economy and tourism. These processes are particularly distinct in the following fields:

Extraction of inert materials. There is a sharp increase of concessions in the river valleys and numerous cases of illegal over-exploitation of inert materials, resulting in a series of drastic environmental changes in the riparian communities. *(The problem is very serious in the Maritsa river valley.)*

Sharp increase of cases of illegal and half-legal construction along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast – serious threat to unique and representative communities, as well as potential losses for the informative environmental tourism.

Sharp increase of cases of flagrant encroachments on the landscape in areas of high conservation value (building of too many mini Water Power Stations, Wind Power Stations, etc.). This activity (supported by the Government), is not only anti-environmental, but it is also in complete contradiction to the European Landscape Convention that was recently ratified by the Bulgarian Parliament.

Unfortunately, the trend of **increasing threats** is much more obvious than the decreasing and halting promised in Kiev. The expected higher economic activeness will result in an avalanche



increase of threats in the above-mentioned sectors, which makes the commitments undertaken in Kiev seem absolutely unrealistic.

3. Assessment of the structural, institutional, and capacity preparedness

This sector is entirely dependent on the most significant political problem in Bulgaria's nature-conservation – the inadequate assessment of the values of Bulgaria's biodiversity by the national governments and Parliaments. In order to implement the reform in this sector and to achieve the 2010 target, a drastic change in the conservation policy is needed. This will be possible only if there is a relevant assessment of the Bulgarian biodiversity as the most significant national riches, whose conservation and protection is a commitment of the national security. Only such assessment would motivate and justified the long-needed multiple increase of the institutional capacity (number of state officials, responsible for the conservation of biological and landscape diversity).

The first part of this article summarizes some of the assessments in the sectors of institutional and capacity preparedness (see page 5), which are entirely valid now. Unfortunately, the preparedness in these sectors has not raised much since 2003.

PART ???

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The inadequate assessment of the Bulgarian nature values, made by the Parliaments and Governments in the period 1989-97, delayed the reform in nature-conservation policy and legislation. Since 1997, the Bulgarian Government has started negotiations for accession, which provided a considerable external incentive for the development of nature-conservation legislation. For less than four years, 9 acts related to natural resource conservation and management have been adopted. The latest and most significant act for conservation of Bulgarian nature is the one adopted on August 9th, 2002 - Biological Diversity Act. This normative act completed the approximation of nature-conservation legislation to the European one. The Act introduced all European directives in the field of biological and landscape diversity. Unfortunately, the progress in the legislative reform does not correspond to the development of structures and institutions in the country. **At this stage, there are no adequate structures for nature and natural resource conservation in the country. The international integration required by the international commitments has not been implemented either** (Convention on Biological Diversity and Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy). Despite availability of good laws and national biological diversity conservation strategy, if they are not integrated into the inter-departmental and regional strategies, plans and programs, the effect of the reform will be very meager.





Bulgarian nature-conservation society, NGOs and independent experts insist on **urgent implementation of institutional and structural reform** in the field of biological diversity conservation and management. For this purpose, nationally responsible decision-makers should make an adequate assessment of the values and significance of Bulgarian nature, as the greatest of the national riches. This assessment would motivate and justified the indisputably necessary reform in nature-conservation policy, which would raise hopes for achieving the 2010 target. The future reform should consist of the following minimum of main political changes:

? Improvement of the capacity and ability of the National Nature Protection Service for making management decisions. The Head of the National Service should receive statute equal to the Deputy Minister of Environment. The regional subdivisions of the Service should considerably increase their numerical strength.



? Adequate attitude of the state budget to nature conservation problems. The budget should assume its responsibility for the development of the National Service structures, as well as for the structures of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, in charge of forests and natural resources.

? Bulgarian Government should elaborate a program for integrating recommendations of the National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy, National Action Plan and relevant international conventions into regional plans and programs.

? The Parliament should pay special attention to the completion of the reform in the resource legislation. The laws in the forest and water sectors should be entirely conformed to the European Directives and the Biodiversity Act, but also to the political documents, such as:  Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy  expanded work program for forest biodiversity to the CBD  Decisions (the Framework for cooperation) of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe  Kiev Resolution on Biodiversity, adopted at the fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe".

? Bulgarian Government, together with National Municipality Society, should elaborate qualification development and education programs of different structures and hierarchy in the field of conservation and resource management. Reform in nature-conservation policy could not be implemented without adequate capacity development.

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Table 1. NATURE CONSERVATION LEGISLATION – BULGARIAN STATUTES AND NORMATIVE ACTS

1. Environment Protection Act
2. Biological Diversity Act
3. Protected Areas Act
4. Forest Act
5. Medicinal Plants Act
6. Hunting and Game Protection Act
7. Water Act
8. Fishery and Aquacultures Act
9. Agricultural Property Protection Act
10. Territorial System Act
11. Regulations for enforcement of the Forest Act
12. Regulations for enforcement of the Hunting and Game Protection Act
13. Regulations for the organization and function of the National Parks Directorates
14. Decree for the elaboration of the protected areas management plans
15. Decree ? 1 for protection of the green areas and ornamental plants
16. Regulations for assignment of activities in protected areas
17. Tariff of the fees paid for the authorized uses in the protected areas
18. Tariff of the fees paid for the uses in protected sites of medicinal plants
19. Order ? 88 of MOEW on the conditions and regulation for allocation of herb quantities, harvested in natural medicinal plants habitats under special protection regimen

Table 2 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

1. UN Convention on Biological Diversity, ratification – 29 Feb, 1996
2. Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat - promulgation 10 July 1992
3. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species - ratification 12 Dec 1990
4. Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage - 17 Dec 1975
5. Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats – ratification 25 Jan 1991
6. Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals – ratification 23 July 1999
7. UN Convention on Desertification in Countries, Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa – ratification Jan 2001
8. Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity – ratification 8 Aug 2000
9. European Convention on Landscape – ratified by 13.10.2004



Table 3 DOCUMENTS FOR MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

1. Pan –European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy
2. Kiev Resolution on Biodiversity
3. National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy
4. National Biodiversity Action Plan
5. National Environmental Strategy and Action Plan
6. National Wetlands Plan
7. Strategy for Conservation and Restoration of the Floodplain Forests on the Danube Islands
8. Declaration on Environment and Sustainable development in the Danube - Carpathian region
9. Declaration on the cooperation for the establishment of Lower Danube Green Corridor

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 - ? District plans for regional development of Haskovo, Pazardzhik and Smolyan districts.
 - ? Strategy for regional development of Kardzhali district
 - ? Strategies for development of the municipalities of Chepelare, Madzharovo, Ardino, Momchilgrad, Banite, Batak, Kirkovo and Assenovgrad
 - ? Strategy of Chepelare municipality for tourism development
 - ? Strategy for economic stabilisation of Bratsigovo municipality
 - ? Update of the waste management program in Nedelino municipality and its implementation
 - ? Order ? 1 of Nedelino municipality

